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**SHIPPERS CHARGED WITH CONCEALING
PLAN TO EXPORT MACHINERY TO IRAN**

CHICAGO — An Iranian man, two officers of shipping companies in Switzerland and the United States and the U.S. company are facing federal charges alleging that they concealed a thwarted plan to export industrial machinery to Iran in violation of the U.S. trade embargo, law enforcement officials announced today. The machinery – a pipe cutting machine, spare chain and slitting saws – were purchased from a company in suburban Wheeling, Ill., and allegedly were en route to Iran through Germany when the goods were seized in March 2003 by law enforcement agents at JFK International Airport in New York.

Three defendants, **Roger Unterberger**, a retired senior vice president of Gondrand AG, headquartered in Basel, Switzerland; **Muhammad Bhatti**, chief operating officer of Jamaica, N.Y.-based **Go-Trans (North America) Inc.**; and **Go-Trans** were charged together with one count of making false statements in a criminal information filed yesterday. The Iranian defendant, **Mohammed R. Meshkin**, was indicted separately Tuesday by a federal grand jury for allegedly violating the Iran trade embargo, announced Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois.

Unterberger, 65, of Oberwail, Switzerland, was arrested based on an earlier complaint on June 4 when he arrived in Chicago. He was later released on \$50,000 bond and ordered to remain in Chicago while the case is pending. Bhatti, 47, of Bethpage, N.Y., and his company, Go-Trans (North America) Inc., were not charged in earlier complaint and they will be arraigned at a later date in U.S. District Court in Chicago.

Meshkin, an Iranian residing outside the United States, was charged with a felony violation of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act for allegedly attempting to export the pipe cutting machine and accessories to Iran. The indictment alleges that he directed the purchase and attempted shipment of the goods to Iran between January 2002 and March 2003. His current whereabouts are unknown and a warrant was issued for his arrest.

Mr. Fitzgerald announced the charges with Wendy Hauser, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Office of Export Enforcement, Bureau of Industry and Security, U.S. Department of Commerce, in Chicago, and Elissa A. Brown, Special Agent-in-Charge of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, in Chicago. The Homeland Security Department's Customs and Border Protection agency also assisted in the investigation.

The charges against Unterberger, Bhatti, and Go-Trans allege that between December 2002 and March 2003, they made plans to export, from the United States to Iran, the machinery and accessories that were purchased from an unnamed company in Wheeling. The goods were transported to JFK International Airport, but were seized by government authorities prior to being exported. The false statements count alleges that the defendants concealed the plan to export the goods to Iran by making arrangements to have the machinery and accessories shipped to Iran indirectly, through Germany, and causing shipping documents to reflect that the destination of the

shipment was Frankfurt. The defendants did not have government authorization to export the goods to Iran, the charges allege.

If convicted of making false statements, Unterberger and Bhatti each face a maximum sentence of five years in prison and a maximum fine of \$250,000. If convicted, Go-Trans faces a maximum penalty of five years probation and a maximum fine of \$500,000. The Court, however, would determine the appropriate sentence to be imposed under the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines.

If convicted of violating the trade embargo, Meshkin faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison and a maximum fine of \$250,000.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Brian Havey.

The public is reminded that the charges are not evidence of guilt and that each defendant is presumed innocent and entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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